REMARKS

The Abstract has been amended to be less than 150 words and to eliminate references to reference numbers in the drawings.

The typographical errors in the specification noted by the Examiner have been corrected.

The claim objections raised in section 3 of the office action have been addressed in the amendments to the claims made herein.

Claims 1-4, 21, 23, 29 and 30-36 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Nikander et al. (US 6,253,321).

Claims 6, 8-14, 16-17, 24 and 27 have been indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form to incorporate the limitations of the base claim. Claims 6 and 8 have been rewritten in independent form. Claim 16 has been rewritten in independent form so as to incorporate most but not all of the limitations of its parent claims 1 and 15. The Examiner's opinion as to whether claim 16 is allowable as rewritten in solicited. Claim 17 depends from claim 16, so if claim 16 is allowable, so should claim 17 be allowable.

In response, claim 1 has been cancelled, and claim 8 has been amended to independent form so as to incorporate the general structure of claim 8's parent claim 1 (which has been cancelled). Claim 8 has been amended to put it into US format, and has been indicated as allowable by the Examiner if rewritten in independent form. Claim 2 has been amended to depend from claim 8 instead of cancelled claim 1. Claim 3 has been amended to conform it to US claim structure. It depends from claim 2 which depends from claim 8. Claim 4 has been amended to conform it to US claim structure. It has been amended to depend from claim 8. Claim 5 has been amended to depend from claim 8 and has been amended to conform to US claiming practice.

Claim 6 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, claim 6 has been rewritten to incorporate the general steps of claims 1 and 2 and to conform it to US claiming practice.

Claim 7 has been amended to depend from claim 8 which is now in condition for allowance, so claim 7 should also be in condition for allowance.

Claim 9 has always depended from claim 8 and should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 10 has always depended from claim 8 and should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 11 depends from claim 10 and should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 12 depends from claim 10 and should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 13 depends from claim 8 and should be in condition for allowance.

Claim 14 depends from claim 8 and should be in condition for allowance.

Claim 15 has been cancelled.

Claim 18 has been amended to depend from claim 6 so claim 18 should now be allowable.

Claim 19 depends from claim 18 and should be allowable.

Claim 20 depends from claim 18 and should be allowable.

Claim 21 formerly depended from claim 1, and has been amended to depend from claim 6 which is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 22 depends from claim 21 and should be in condition for allowance.

Claim 23 formerly depended from claim 1, and has been amended to depend from claim 6 which is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 24 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form to incorporate the limitations of the parent claims. Therefore, claim 24 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 1, 2, 6 and 23, all of which were in the string of parent claims.

Claim 25 depends from claim 6 and is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 26 depends from claim 25 and is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 27 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form incorporating all the limitations of the base claim and all the intervening claims. Claim 27 was rewritten in independent form but not so as to incorporate all the limitations of the base claim and all the intervening claims.

Claim 28 depends from claim 25 which depends from claim 6, and is therefore in condition for allowance.

Claim 29 has been amended to conform it to US claim practice. It is a means plus function claim that claims the apparatus described in the specification that implements the method of cancelled claim 1 and equivalents. Accordingly, the claim should be interpreted to include the apparatus described in the specification that implements the method of cancelled claim 1. Not all these limitations properly in the properly interpreted claim are

present in the cited Nikander reference, so claim 29 should be in condition for allowance.

Claim 30 depends from claim 29 and should therefore be in condition for allowance.

Claim 31 depends from claim 30 and should therefore be in condition for allowance.

Claim 32 is an independent means plus function claim which claims the apparatus disclosed in the specification which generally implements the process of claim 2 and equivalents. As such, it should be interpreted to include the apparatus in the specification that implement this process. Not all these limitations are present in the Nikander reference, so claim 32 should be in condition for allowance.

Claim 33 is a program claim that claims a program which, when executed on a computer, performs all the steps of original claim 1. This claim should be interpreted in accordance with the specification to include all the limitations from the specification that describe programs which can perform the process of claim 1. Not all these limitations are present in Nikander.

Claim 34 is a program medium claim that claims a program stored on a computer-readable medium which program, when executed on a computer, performs all the steps of original claim 1. This claim should be interpreted in accordance with the specification to include all the limitations from the specification that describe programs stored on a computer-readable medium which can perform the process of claim 1. Not all these limitations are present in Nikander.

Claim 35 is an apparatus claim covering a network element comprising means to do the functions required to carry out the recited process steps along the lines of original claim 1. This claim is stated in means plus function format and should be interpreted in accordance with the specification to include all the limitations from the specification that describe programmed apparatus which can perform the process of original claim 1. Not all these limitations are present in Nikander.

Claim 36 is an apparatus claim depending from claim 35 covering a network element comprising means to do the functions recited along the lines of original claims 1and 2. This claim is stated in means plus function format and should be interpreted in accordance with the specification to include all the limitations from the specification that describe programmed apparatus which can perform the recited functions. Not all these limitations are present in Nikander.

Claim 37 is an apparatus claim covering a network element cluster comprising

means to do the functions required to carry out the recited process steps along the lines of original claim 1. This claim is stated in means plus function format and should be interpreted in accordance with the specification to include all the limitations from the specification that describe programmed apparatus which can perform the process of original claim 1. Not all these limitations are present in Nikander.

Claim 38 is an apparatus claim depending from claim 37 covering a network element cluster comprising means to do the functions recited along the lines of original claims 1and 2. This claim is stated in means plus function format and should be interpreted in accordance with the specification to include all the limitations from the specification that describe programmed apparatus which can perform the recited functions. Not all these limitations are present in Nikander.

New Claims 39 - 46 are directed to a storage medium carrying a computer-executable software and to a network element with essentially the same features as the allowable claims.

All claims should now be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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